

those general measures which the united interests of America may from time to time require."

A call was also issued for a convention of delegates from the counties of Virginia to consider matters of interest to the colony and to appoint delegates to the Congress at Philadelphia. A paper was passed by this convention setting forth the grievances of the colony and earnestly urging concerted action on the part of the colonies. They were careful, however, in this paper to express in strong language their loyalty to King George the Third, "our lawful and rightful sovereign," pledging him with their lives and fortunes, support in the legal exercise of all his just rights and prerogatives. This convention adjourned on Saturday, August 6th, and Mr. Henry immediately took up his journey to the meeting of the first Continental Congress. He stopped overnight at Mt. Vernon and enjoyed the hospitality and counsel of George Washington, and next day continued his journey to Philadelphia, having as his fellow-travelers Washington and Edmund Pendleton. Quite a number of the delegates to the Continental Congress had already arrived. The account of the times indicate great interest on the part of the delegates in making the acquaintance of each other.

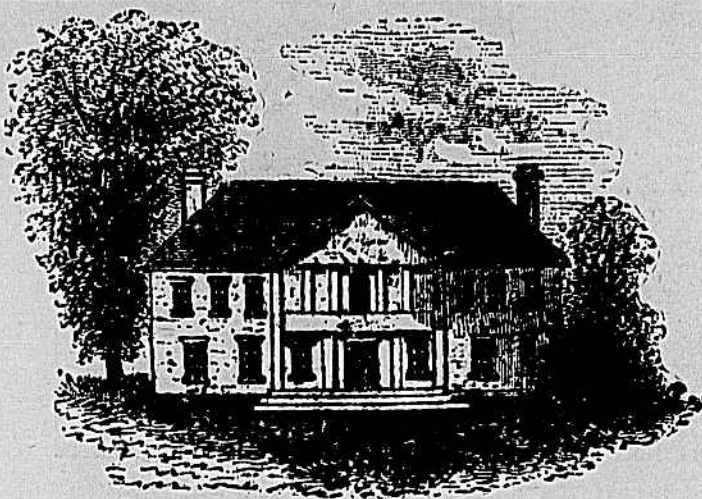
The convention was organized on the 5th day of September, with Peyton Randolph, of Virginia, as president, and a Mr. Thompson, of Philadelphia, as secretary. Mr. Henry was a most active factor in all the work of this convention, serving on all of its most prominent committees, but there seems to be small ground for the assertion that the convention was at any time overawed with the majesty of his speech and eloquence. The real facts concerning Mr. Henry's relation to this convention do not warrant the statement which is made by Mr. Jefferson many years after the meeting of this convention, "that the superior powers of Patrick Henry were manifest only in debate, and that he and Richard Henry Lee took the undisputed lead in the Assembly during the first days of the session while general grievances were the topic, and that both of them were completely thrown in the shade when called down from the heights of declamation to that severer test of intelligent excellence, the details of business." Mr. Jefferson throughout seems to have been at special pains to make the impression that Mr. Henry's ability consisted only and solely in his power of declamation, when the real truth is that in all the different conventions in which he met, and in all the conferences held during these exciting times his services as a wise and far-seeing statesman were called more into requisition than the use of his gifts as a speaker and orator. The fact that in all the committees into whose hands were committed matters of most practical importance, Mr. Henry was a member, is a very clear indication of the esteem in which he was held by those bodies.

On Monday, the 20th of March, 1775, the second Revolutionary Convention of Virginia assembled in old St. John's Church, Richmond, Va. It was perhaps at this convention that Mr. Henry's eloquence reached its loftiest plane. It was his speech made on a resolution recommending the immediate raising of a military force, setting forth the fact that such a force would render it unnecessary for the mother country to keep any standing army, and further setting forth the fact that such a force seemed to be peculiarly necessary at that juncture for the protection and defense of the country, and in order to secure inestimable rights and liberties from the further violence with which they were threatened; and finally, that the colony be put immediately into a posture of defense, and that a committee be appointed to prepare a plan for arming and disciplining such a number of men as might be sufficient for that purpose. There was really nothing startlingly new in the general import of these resolutions, for not only in Virginia, but throughout well-nigh all the colonies, just such military steps had been taken. It has been said that these resolutions, so far from being premature, were rather tardy. It is altogether probable that the only point of disagreement was the urgency and precipitancy of Mr. Henry's resolution. The conservative Virginian was unwilling to give up the hope that there might be some final and peaceful adjustment of difficulties made with England, and the startling thing in these resolutions and in Mr. Henry's speech made in their support was that he had unmistakably given up all hope of any peaceful adjustment, declaring essentially that the war had already begun and the exigencies called no longer for debate or petition or protest, but for immediate belligerent action.

It will be quite impossible to give here anything like an adequate description of this superlative utterance of the great commoner. It is seriously to be doubted whether on any occasion a sublimer height was ever attained by any orator.

The resolution, in spite of the opposition of wise and good men, was passed, and the committee called for was appointed, and Mr. Henry was made chairman. Associated with him were Richard Henry Lee, Nicholas, Harrison, Riddick, Washington, Stevens, Lewis, Christian, Pendleton, Jefferson and Zane.

It took the committee only one day to prepare its plan for



ANCIENT CAPITOL, WILLIAMSBURG.

enlisting, arming and disciplining the militia, and after laying over for one day for some alteration, the report of the committee was unanimously adopted. The convention adjourned on the 27th of March.

About one month after the meeting of this convention, on the night of the 20th of April, 1775, a detachment of marines from an English schooner, the *Magdalen*, visited the magazine in Williamsburg, which was the public storehouse for gunpowder and arms, and carried away fifteen barrels of gunpowder and stored them on their own vessel. The news of this depredation spread with alarming rapidity throughout the colony, and four days afterward a company at Fredericksburg notified their colonel, George Washington, that they were ready with many other bodies of men to appear in support of the honor of Virginia, and at his command would set out for Williamsburg. From other counties there came similar messages to Washington. It had been determined on the 29th as the day fixed for the march upon Williamsburg. On that day one hundred and two gentlemen, representing the fourteen companies that had offered their services, met for a conference, and after considering a letter from Peyton Randolph assuring them that the affair of the gunpowder would be satisfactorily arranged, came to the conclusion that they would proceed no further at that time, but pledged themselves, however, that they hold themselves "in readiness to reassemble and by force of arms to defend the law, the liberty and the rights of this or any other sister colony from unjust and wicked invasion."

Mr. Henry, who had been a close observer of these exciting events from his home in Hanover county, was greatly disappointed that more aggressive steps were not taken. It seemed to him wise that an immediate blow should be struck, and the people needed to be reassured of their own strength by some overt act of war. He resolved that he himself would take the field and lead in the delivering of such a blow. He requested, therefore, that the companies of his own county meet him in arms at Newcastle, on the 2d of May, on business of the highest importance to American liberty. With this company he also asked the presence of the county committee. When the meeting was held he strongly urged that immediate action should be taken to march on the capital and either to recover the gunpowder or procure its equivalent. The officer in immediate command resigned, and Mr. Henry was put in charge of the proposed expedition. Many wise and conservative, and even patriotic, men were greatly distressed at this precipitate procedure, and sent urgent messages asking Mr. Henry that he return home. On the other hand, so greatly stirred were the people that five thousand men from various quarters sprang to arms and sought to become members of the expedition marching on Williamsburg.

At Williamsburg great consternation was felt, and the Governor's family was sent out of the city to a place of safety. An appeal was made to the commander of the English ship for immediate assistance against an invasion that threatened Lord Dunmore with an attack at daybreak at his palace at Williamsburg. Before the final issue was made, however, Governor Dunmore concluded that something had better be done to propitiate the irate Henry. He accordingly sent a messenger to Mr. Henry bearing a sum of money amounting to £330, as compensation for the gunpowder which had been taken from the magazine. The object for which the expedition had gone out having been accomplished, there was nothing to do but that the forces should separate and return to their respective homes.

On the 18th of May Patrick Henry took his place among the delegates to the second Continental Congress, and remained in attendance from the first session of the convention until its final adjournment on August 1st. In this convention, as in the former one, Mr. Henry seems to have been most active in all the practical work of the body. In the accounts of this convention there is again to be discovered a wide discrep-